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COUNTY RESPONDS TO DUMPING ON LOCAL BEACHES

County Responds to Dumping on Local Beaches

NEWS REPORT / JAN 13 2018 12:30 AM / BYEDHAT STAFF / 33 COMMENTS / READS 6291

Sediment dumping at Goleta Beach (Photo: Eric Lyman / Twitter)

Update by County of Santa Barbara
5:00 p.m., January 12, 2018

ONGOING COUNTY RESTORATION EFFORTS REQUIRE TRANSPORT OF SEDIMENT TO LOCAL BEACHES

As search and rescue continues, county, city, state, and federal agencies are conducting restoration efforts simultaneously. These efforts include cleaning out debris in basins and channels and clearing roads for access to repair utilities and to reopen Highway 101 and State Route 192.

Part of restoration includes transporting sediment cleared from roads and channels to local beaches. The sediment consists of wet or dry dirt or mud and does not contain rocks, debris, or vegetation. Santa Barbara County Flood Control District obtained emergency permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Coastal Commission to place sediment on local beaches. Current permits allow up to 300,000 cubic yards of sediment to be placed into the surf zone (i.e. where the waves are breaking) at Goleta Beach and Carpinteria Beach at the end of Ash Avenue.

At this time, approximately 800 cubic yards has been transported to Goleta Beach. Approximately 900 cubic yards has been transported to Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Sediment transported to Carpinteria Beach is mainly coming from Franklin Creek and Santa Monica Creek within Carpinteria Salt Marsh. The amount of sediment transported to the beaches is of less quantity than the level of sediment that naturally flows through the drainage system during a rainfall event. Sediment clean-up will continue to restore the area to pre-storm conditions as quickly as possible. Without these efforts, subsequent storms will cause more destruction.

Santa Barbara County Flood Control personnel are at each site inspecting each load that is delivered. They are instructed to refuse any load that contains unpermitted material. Occasional rocks and other material are being hand-picked and set aside for disposal. Both Goleta and Carpinteria Beach have been used in the past for both routine and emergency sediment placement.

Emergency permits issued do not require testing for this critical operation. However, Public Health Department officials will continue to test ocean waters and will act accordingly.

County officials understand the seriousness of this activity and how community members may be concerned. This extraordinarily horrific incident has required County personnel to work under emergency permits. However, precautions are being taken, including inspecting loads for unpermitted materials.

Response from Hillary Hauser, Executive Director of Heal the Ocean

Heal the Ocean has received numerous (some irate) phone calls regarding the mud being deposited on Goleta and Carpinteria beaches. Television media has also called for a response from us. We told them, and everyone else, we were investigating and would let everyone know when we knew the answer. We at HTO don't believe environmental knee-jerk reactions help anything, least of all the environment.

First, the Thomas Fire/mudslide is a disaster of enormous proportions. Possibly the worst since the Earthquake of 1925 took down the Potter Hotel. The 101 Freeway is still closed, and as this commentary is written, now closed indefinitely, because the workers, as they remove mud and debris, are carefully combing the water and debris for bodies of missing persons.

More importantly, the decision to deposit mud on Goleta and Carpinteria beaches Is a decision not made lightly by the numerous agencies charged with dealing with this massive problem - including public works officials from the city and county of Santa Barbara, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cal Trans, and the contractors themselves.

Prudent decision-making is harder in a time of disaster of this magnitude (Think Katrina)...but a decision-making process is put in place nonetheless, to consider the options. Tom Fayram, Director of Santa Barbara County Public Works, told Heal the Ocean today (Friday, January 12) that "when the mud is 10 feet high on a telephone pole on Danielson Road (Montecito), and when people are still missing, maybe buried in mud...we have only a few options, the chief one of which is "to return the community to normal as soon as possible."

"That is what we are doing to the best of our abilities," Fayram said. "After we get the community back in shape, people can slap me all they want."

Beyond that, all those concerned with the water quality of the ocean need to know the following:
—There are two County Environmental Planners at each site, inspecting "every single truckload," and those that don't meet requirements are turned away...to a site off Highway 154;
— Debris and vegetation is going to a site in Buellton and/or Ventura County Fairgrounds for holding until future disposal decisions can be made.

Ventura County is helping. Many agencies that have weighed the options available to solve this massive problem are working night and day. Dogs are being employed to find missing people buried in mud and debris.

Heal the Ocean asks all Ocean lovers and surfers (who should accept the fact they shouldn't get into the water right now) to support the agencies working hard to get us out of this mess.

And our thoughts and prayers go out to all those still searching for loved ones.

Posted at 9:00 a.m., January 12, 2018

Edhat readers wonder, why is mud from Montecito being dumped at several local beaches?

- Sludge from Montecito now being dumped at: Carpinteria Beach, Goleta Beach and Via Chaparral area off of Cathedral Oaks.
- According to News Channel 11 the mud that is being pumped from the 101 freeway in Montecito from the mudslide is being dumped at Goleta Beach. This seems like an outrageous violation of water quality standards and clean water principles. That mud is full of oil byproducts, ash from the fire and clay sediment that has cement-like qualities not compatible with marine life. What are they thinking? This is an outrage.
-

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SBPAUL JAN 13, 2018 05:25 AM

When heal the ocean is saying "Heal the Ocean asks all ocean lovers and surfers (Who should accept the fact they should not get into the water right now) To support the agencies working hard to get us out of this mess. We are" Quoted from Hillary Hauser (not my english) I think we can all get off our soap boxes and accept the fact this thing is a disaster and disaster clean up is just that, mitigating a disaster. I am not sure who people find validation with regarding their outrage with this. I feel pretty good about sleeping at night knowing that a trusted organization like heal the ocean is aware of the scope of this disaster and agrees that working with authorities is our best move forward. Complaining yesterday and raising hell for emergency responders like they were dumping paint from a ford plant when people's bodies were still being recovered is SAD.

GOLETAMAN JAN 12, 2018 10:26 PM

From a civil engineering standpoint, we should accept that the landscape and flood planes have changed permanently, tamp it down in place and build over it. Digging up all that earth and debris is temporary and quite frankly an insurmountable task. It will take too long, cost too much, and flooding/mudslides will most likely happen again, possibly every time it rains or a water main breaks; for the next few years. Also, the toxins will dissipate as long as the earth is not dug up, loaded onto trucks and spread throughout the county. Instead, the energy and money and time spent trying to move literally a mountain of earth, rock, and debris should be spent re-paving, rebuilding, reinstating pipelines, underground electric, and water mains. This would ensure a solid and sustainable future for Montecito.

SBPAUL JAN 13, 2018 05:32 AM

Sounds like my gross college roommate that I woke up to his vomit on the kitchen floor and he laid paper towels all over it... Just tamp it down. The was the result of a fire and was a mudflow not mud slide. I am not a civil engineer but I do know the difference.

ROGER JAN 12, 2018 05:49 PM

It should be dumped in the bird refuge.

BOOKMAN JAN 12, 2018 05:37 PM

Hey, A-digit-head, read this and think: "According to the latest County Health beach warning posted by KEYT, it says " The mudslides and runoff from the Jan. 9 storm contain unknown amounts of untreated sewage and chemical contaminants." "Just creek mud," huh? Think again.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:35 PM

I hope this violation of our clean water standards ceases immediately. There are all kinds of household chemicals, bags of fertilizer, plastic bits and other harmful junk in that sludge that should go to a hazmat dump, not where it will contaminate our ocean habitat. What an abomination. OP---thank you for bringing this to our attention. Coastal Commission and Supervisors get on this and fix it.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:30 PM

Maybe those who are clutching their pearls over the dumping location should try to find a better place for it. Be helpful.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:12 PM

Hey, did you see the Edhat post about the closed beaches and see the levels of bacteria count is? This is what is in the mud.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:01 PM

That is toxic waste. They know that.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:32 PM

Why not dump the sludge along the Rincon? The freeway is closed, so it would be a quicker roundtrip than driving out to Goleta Beach. Or, dump it at the Montecito Country Club, Manning Park, etc. Keep it local.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 04:33 PM

Why not dump the sludge along the Rincon? The freeway is closed, so it would be a quicker roundtrip than driving out to Goleta Beach. Or, dump it at the Montecito Country Club, Manning Park, etc. Keep it local.

GARTH JAN 12, 2018 04:34 PM

Why not dump the sludge along the Rincon? The freeway is closed, so it would be a quicker roundtrip than driving out to Goleta Beach. Or, dump it at the Montecito Country Club, Manning Park, etc. Keep it local.

PCSB JAN 12, 2018 04:05 PM

r/t A-1515800698 . This is not just creek water. Why minimize the toxic waste that is in the mud? This is a tragic decision by Caltrans and the County of Santa Barbara to allow it. Who has been in touch with the Coastal Commission?

EDNSB JAN 12, 2018 02:58 PM

Their own information say they are NOT testing this material. It is absolutely 180 degrees from the advice they gave us during the fire to NOT wash the ashes in to the ocean. Using the ocean as a toilet is awful. And yes I know they have to dump it somewhere.. That is what landfills are for especially if they are NOT testing it.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 03:43 PM

You know that your household poop goes into the ocean, right? Sure, it's aerated a bit and partially digested by microorganisms but the bulk of the solid waste is still pumped into the ocean, only 1 mile off shore.

SHOREBIRD JAN 12, 2018 02:27 PM

Maybe not the greatest material to use for Goleta Beach, but if it is not constantly replenished, it will go away.

BOOKMAN JAN 12, 2018 01:43 PM

Generaltree: Those are two completely separate issues. Don't demagogue it! The citizens of our community fully appreciate the hardship -- emotional and physical -- born by all the first responders. On the other hand, where the contaminated waste goes is a matter of public policy and needs to be handled carefully.

GENERALTREE JAN 12, 2018 03:52 PM

I'll tell you Bookman, the ocean water there is already contaminated following the run due to sewer water from the rains already. If you haven't noticed, SB County beaches have been closed. The mud being quickly moved to allow rescuers access is the same mud that was pushed into the ocean already by the rains. Priorities.

OCEANDREW JAN 12, 2018 03:39 PM

What contaminated waste? It's runoff. The same type of runoff that flows into the gutters on any street in the county. Does the city treat its runoff? Nope... goes straight into the ocean. So why is Montecito getting such agro? Where are the locations in Montecito that trucks can back up to the ocean and dump a bunch of mud that isn't private property? Even in a crisis the rule of law applies.

GENERALTREE JAN 12, 2018 12:35 PM

People are getting upset about mud flowing into the ocean when we literally have hundreds of responders out there searching for the missing and rescuing the living ?

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 12:13 PM

Um...maybe they aren't dumping the sludge, but Goleta beach needs a rock revetment and Montecito presently has lots of rocks to give away.

YETI JAN 12, 2018 12:04 PM

Now isn't it ironic that the sludge from Montecito is being dumped every where ELSE instead of in Montecito?? In all fairness, if they are going to dump it in the ocean, put in front of the Biltmore and the Miramonte. It seems very Trumpish, to dump the rich person's crap, in someone else's back yard!

EASTBEACH JAN 12, 2018 10:55 AM

Nobody is saying proper disposal of the contaminated mud should be to the exclusion of rescue efforts. It's not an either or thing. We should be able to do both right.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 12:22 PM

Right... pumped out of the harbour and onto the beach just upstream from Montecito.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 11:36 AM

Agree. They should use the same safe and environmentally friendly method that is used to dredge our harbor.

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 10:36 AM

They're dumping just creek mud. The same mud that would be flowing into the ocean anyway. Similar to mud that was just recently dredged out of Maria Ygancio creek. If the mud is full of contaminants, that's a separate issue. Sediment winds up in the ocean whether you want it to or not. What is Montecito supposed to do with the mud otherwise? Jeez, lend a helping hand instead of being a NIMBY

SBPAUL JAN 12, 2018 10:31 AM

3 days in and people still missing. I asked a simple question about beach closures and all of a sudden everyone is up in arms. Please remember there are people still missing and this muck is between potential survivors and help. Of course if you have a better more convenient place to put this then speak up but don't get all sensational about the environment when there are people missing and they could still be alive.

LOCALMATT JAN 12, 2018 10:16 AM

It's also going to the transfer station on calle real.

BOOKMAN JAN 12, 2018 10:14 AM

Why do individuals think the ocean is a convenient "sh*thole" to dump our garbage in, including oil, plastics, building materials and on and on...?

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 12:09 PM

Where do you think your toilet waste goes? Yes, it's treated (aerated actually) and pumped 1/2 a mile to 1 mile offshore. Where did you think it went.

ASITIS JAN 12, 2018 10:04 AM

Oh come on... the natural flow of mud and debris is to the ocean anyway. I'm sure they're not dumping non-organic stuff like a car or house material. Who took this photo? It looks like from a drone perspective, and isn't Goleta Beach too close to the airport to be flying a drone? That's what should be investigated!

ROETTER1 JAN 12, 2018 09:58 AM

Thanks for giving this serious matter greater attention. Mayor Perotte returned my call immediately regarding this situation and has been on it since 6:30 this morning and she is making contact with Supervisor Janet Wolf who oversees Goleta Beach since under county jurisdiction. Also Heal the Ocean has been informed so we should get better insight soon but appears that Ca. Coastal Commission issued permit last night Terribly tragic situation for those in Montecito and hope recovery can be sooner than later but also need to consider how we do it so that a larger long term health risk to the community as a whole is not created.

EASTBEACH JAN 12, 2018 10:10 AM

So it sounds like governmental agencies are doing the dumping (as opposed to private contractors hired by residents)? I wonder if SB County Health was involved in the decision making? They're the agency that issues beach closure warnings. According to the latest County Health beach warning posted by KEYT, it says " The mudslides and runoff from the Jan. 9 storm contain unknown amounts of untreated sewage and chemical contaminants.".

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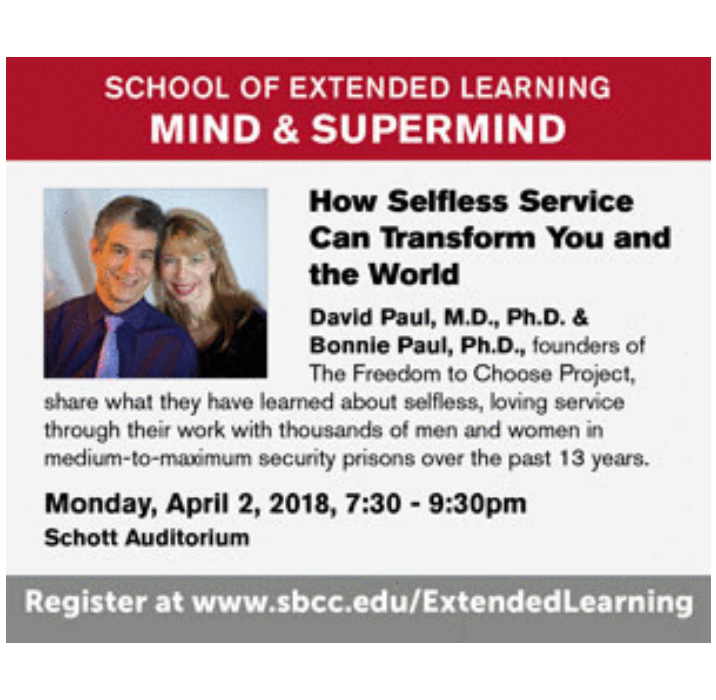

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